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Pest Patrol News

Protect Children from Accidental Poisoning



With children spending much more time at home these days, home safety has become an especially important topic. Children of all ages are naturally curious, and young children tend to put most anything into their mouths. Unfortunately, most homeowners store a vast array of poisonous products within easy reach of children.

Tragically, children under six alone account for about **ONE MILLION reported poisonings** every year in the U.S., and 6-19 year olds account for many more.

Approximately half of all poisonings are caused by swallowing *medicines*, especially analgesics like aspirin and acetaminophen. *Cleaning substances* such as *bleaches and detergents* are the next greatest cause of accidental poisonings, followed by *cosmetics and personal care products*. Other products children may ingest or spray on themselves or friends include *pesticides, dyes, lighter fluid, gasoline, anti-freeze, pool chemicals, and batteries*. Recently, the number of tragic cases of children poisoned by *E-Cigs* lying around the home has skyrocketed.

To help prevent these poisonings, it is a smart idea to install child-resistant latches on all cabinets you use to store

medicines, cleaning agents, and other products that can cause problems when they are swallowed, sprayed in eyes, or contact skin. Move these products out of reach of young children, to a higher, less accessible cabinet if you can't secure the cabinet door. It is also a good idea to install a lock of some kind on utility cabinets, garden sheds, and any areas that store poisons.

Get rid of expired prescription drugs, along with most or all pesticides—you don't need them anymore because you use our professional services.

Pantry Pests Eat Most Everything

Yuck—there are bugs in this food!

Because of the **COVID-19 virus**, people are spending more time eating at home, and may stock up more on food supplies. This has resulted in pests in our stored foods becoming an increasingly common problem.

Pantry pests are pests that invade packages of food, and eat and eat. They lay their eggs and multiply either inside or outside the packages. Some of these **beetles, weevils, moths, and other pests** eat only certain kinds of foods, and others are generalists that will eat almost everything we, or our pets, eat. Pantry pests commonly attack *cereal, pasta, flour, cake and muffin mixes, nuts, dried fruits, candies, and pet foods*. Amazingly, some pantry pests are even quite happy eating our hottest spices—these pests



truly have cast-iron stomachs!

If you find these pests in your home, begin by thoroughly searching to find where they are feeding and breeding. Start by inspecting food you have been storing the longest, especially food stored in a box or bag.

Some of these pests also feed on wool, leather, and fur, or could be feeding on seeds and other items in the house.

Get rid of ALL containers that you either know, or suspect, are infested. Either use up old containers of food or throw them out. Clean up any food spills in cabinets. Don't buy food in a box or bag that is damaged or has holes in it, because these may already be infested. Call us for an inspection and service with a persistent pantry pest infestation.

Pest Prevention Tip of the Month

Animals are breaking into homes, garages, and sheds, and can cause a lot of damage. Inspect and repair all air vents to make sure the wire mesh is still securely attached, and there are no large holes or gaps where it has been pushed in.



Why do you **ALWAYS** pick the house where everyone is on a diet?!?

Eradicating Rats Wiped out Mosquitoes



The Palmyra Atoll is a little known, small chain of islets a thousand miles south of Hawaii. Rats had invaded it while troops were there during World War II. Without natural predators, the rats thrived, devouring seabird eggs, native crabs, and whatever seeds and seedlings they could find. The rats eventually wiped out the native crabs and a number of

ground-nesting seabirds.

Fortunately, the rats on the atoll were eradicated in 2011 in a coordinated rat baiting project. *Crabs and seabirds came back, as expected, but another, completely unexpected benefit resulted—mosquitoes stopped biting.* A two-year survey was just completed, and it confirms this, having found not a single Asian Tiger mosquito there.

The Asian Tiger mosquito (a species that invaded the U.S. in 1985 and is now in 40 states), is capable of transmitting a number of dangerous diseases to humans. This mosquito feeds during the day, preferentially on mammals (including rats and people on the islet). Before the rats were eliminated these mosquitoes tormented the few people who were there. There are only from five to 30 scientists who live there at any one time.



Were the mosquitoes eliminated because their main host, rats, were eliminated, and there were not enough people and no other mammals to feed on? Perhaps, but that is not the whole story. When the rats were there, they gnawed the fallen coconut shells in half so they could eat the succulent coconut flesh inside. These half-shells littered the atoll. The coconut shells would fill with rainwater and became ideal places for mosquito larvae to grow.

With the rats gone, the main food source of the mosquitoes was gone, plus the mosquitoes had a harder time finding standing water to complete their life cycle. *The rats were not only causing problems themselves, they were also the reason dangerous mosquitoes thrived there!*

Lone Star Ticks—A Growing Threat



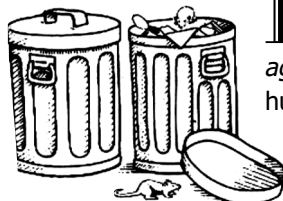
The Lone Star tick got its name because it has a characteristic white dot, vaguely star-shaped, on its back. Many people have never heard about this tick, but it is spreading in this country. Although it fortunately doesn't transmit the bacterium that causes Lyme disease, it increasingly has been found transmitting some other serious new and expanding diseases.

This tick is now in much of the eastern half of the country. Its northern spread use to be limited to southern New Jersey, but in the last few decades they have been spreading north, all the way to southern Canada.

The bite of the Lone Star tick has been found to transmit several serious disease-causing organisms, including **Heartland virus, tularemia, ehrlichiosis, southern tick-associated rash illness** (known as STARI, which causes a rash similar to Lyme disease), and the **Bourbon virus**. Strangely enough, the bite of the lone star tick can also cause a person to develop an *allergy to red meat*, known as **alpha-gal syndrome**, discovered in 2009.

Interestingly, the new Heartland virus that this tick transmits was discovered in 2009 in Missouri. So far it appears that the Lone Star tick is the primary transmitter of the virus to humans. Most people recover from the virus, but there have been two known deaths so far. People have now been infected by the virus in six states, with the most recent infections happening in Illinois. Unfortunately, like many tick-transmitted diseases, Heartland virus is an emerging disease, and we still don't know how far it will spread, and how common a problem it will become.

Rats and Mice are Moving About



Restaurants and other businesses, and often entire cities, have closed, re-opened, and then closed again because of the **COVID-19 virus**. This is causing hungry rats and mice that depend on the human food, trash and litter in these places for their food to wander about more in search of new sources. Sometimes these pests are even being spotted wandering about in the daytime, a sign of rodent

overpopulation and stress.

At the same time, people are spending more time at home, eating more there and creating more food waste that *can attract rats and mice*. Because of this situation, we are alerting everyone to make sure you properly dispose of trash, clean up your premises regularly, keep all stored food in sealed containers and not accessible to rodents, and seal openings rodents might use to enter your home or garage.

